

Alcohol consumption is a factor influencing marital discord, when these variables are assessed cross-sectionally. However, current research lacks measures of daily change. This study explores spouse/partner drinking and relationship harmony among heavy drinkers not seeking treatment. 222 participants (32.9% female), identified by primary care physicians as being at-risk drinkers were recruited for this study. Participants were asked to call an automated interactive voice response system (IVR) daily for 180 days, to complete a survey about alcohol consumption and related variables for the previous calendar day. Respondents indicated how many drinks they'd had, estimated the number of drinks their partner had, and rated their relationship harmony on a scale of 0 (worst) to 9 (best). Respondents called on 70% of days. Respondents reported alcohol consumption on 74.7% of days, and an average of 3.8 drinks per day. Estimates of partner drinking averaged 1.86 drinks. Mean relationship harmony rating was above average ($M=6.28$). There was a significant positive association between respondent alcohol consumption and partner drinking ($r=.336$, $p<.01$, $n=19139$ calls); however, this relationship was somewhat stronger for females ($r=.489$, $p<.01$, $n=5497$) than males ($r=.359$, $p<.01$, $n=13642$). Overall, the association between relationship harmony and alcohol consumption was not significant ($r=-.011$, $n=20905$); however, gender effects emerged, showing a significant positive association for females ($r=.036$, $p<.01$, $n=6315$) and a significant negative association for males ($r=-.019$, $p<.05$, $n=14590$). The association found between daily alcohol consumption of respondents and their partners is consistent with prior research using different methods of assessment. Thus, the findings support the strength of this phenomenon. The finding that respondent drinking and relationship harmony have opposite associations for men and women is unexpected and may have implications for alcoholism treatments. The strength of this study is the unique daily assessment methodology. Therefore, these data make a substantial contribution to the current literature.